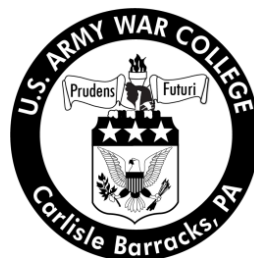


## Transforming the Army Service Component Command to a Theater Army

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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by

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## **Abstract**

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In 2005-2007, when the U.S. Army restructured to a modular force, the Department of the Army also transformed the theater-level commands, known as Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), to a more capable headquarters and staff while adding certain subordinate, theater-enabling functions, as required by geographic region. With these changes, the geographical ASCCs transformed to theater army headquarters, but neither ASCCs nor theater armies are well understood by most in the U.S. Army. Adding to the confusion and misunderstanding, each theater is unique; therefore, the ASCCs are structured differently to meet the demands of a particular theater and Geographical Combatant Command. It is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of an ASCC and what are the differences compared to a theater army headquarters. Why do ASCCs exist? This will help to identify the challenges and organization shortfalls that still must be overcome to fully operate as a theater army headquarters.



## **Transforming the Army Service Component Command to a Theater Army**

We must transform our force to provide the combatant commanders dominant, strategically responsive forces capable of meeting diverse challenges across the entire spectrum of 21<sup>st</sup> century conflict.

—GEN George W. Casey, Jr.<sup>1</sup>  
36<sup>th</sup> Army Chief of Staff

In 2005-2007, when the U.S. Army restructured to a modular force – from a division-centric Army to a brigade-centric Army, the Department of the Army also transformed the theater-level commands, known as U.S. Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), to a more capable headquarters and staff while adding certain subordinate, theater-enabling, support functions, as required by geographic region. With these changes, the geographical ASCCs transformed to theater army headquarters, but neither ASCCs nor theater armies are well understood by most in the U.S. Army, especially since most officers have limited interaction at the theater-level until after brigade command or near the end of their officer career.<sup>2</sup> Adding to the confusion and misunderstanding, each theater is unique, therefore, the ASCCs are structured differently to meet the demands of a particular theater and Geographical Combatant Command (GCC).<sup>3</sup> Additionally, theater-level command structure, duties, and responsibilities are not well documented with only two Army publications focused on ASCCs or theater armies. Army Regulation 10-87 outlines the missions, functions, and relationships at the Army command level, but it is limited in scope.<sup>4</sup> The main reference is the new Field Manual 3-93 *Theater Army Operations* which recently replaced FM 100-7 *Decisive Operations: The Army in Theater Operations* in October 2011.<sup>5</sup> It is important to understand the roles and responsibilities of an ASCC and what are the differences compared to a theater army headquarters. Why do ASCCs exist? This

paper will help to identify the challenges and organization shortfalls that still must be overcome to fully operate as a theater army headquarters. With the current rebalance in U.S. National Security Strategy to the Asia-Pacific with an increasingly complex environment, a deeper look at the U.S. Army Pacific Headquarters will assist in identifying and making recommendations and changes to: 1) the theater-level command relationships, 2) the ASCC/theater army command structure and capabilities, and 3) select theater army staff sections and organization redesign, in order to provide relevant theater-wide support to the GCC.<sup>6</sup> The Army must respond to the future strategic operating environment and implement a strategy that best supports this challenging environment. The ASCC must be optimally organized to provide a robust theater army headquarters to meet the multiple demands of the GCC in peacetime and crisis.

#### U.S. Army Service Component Command

What is a U.S. Army Service Component Command? The ASCC is the senior Army service representative and headquarters in a theater reporting directly to the region's GCC. The ASCC headquarters is regionally focused and operates at the theater-strategic level. Each GCC requires an Army headquarters that directs the activities of theater-committed Army forces, and there is only one ASCC or senior Army headquarters within a combatant commander's Area of Responsibility (AOR). This Army headquarters includes the senior Army commander and all Army personnel, organizations, units, and installations assigned to the theater and GCC.<sup>7</sup> In addition, this senior Army headquarters performs functions required by Title 10, United States Code (USC) Section 3013(b) responsibilities (train, man, equip, organize, maintain, service, construct facilities, etc.), and fulfills Army executive agent, Army Support to Other Services (ASOS), and Common User Logistics (CUL) responsibilities.<sup>8</sup> The ASCCs

exercise command and control under the authority and direction of the combatant commanders (CCDRs) to whom they are assigned. The CCDR normally delegates Operational Control (OPCON) of Army forces to the ASCC, while the Secretary of the Army generally delegates Administrative Control (ADCON) to the ASCC for Army forces assigned or attached to the CCDR, therefore giving the ASCC the authority and responsibility to exercise administration and support under Title 10 USC.<sup>9</sup>

The primary role of the ASCC to a GCC is organized into three categories: (1) daily operational requirements, (2) setting the theater, and (3) providing mission command.<sup>10</sup> The daily operational requirements include the Army's Title 10 USC responsibilities, executing the GCC's Theater Campaign Plan, supporting Theater Security Cooperation Plans, providing Army expertise in writing support plans to theater contingencies, and maintaining regionally-focused intelligence, leader engagements, and overall Army responsiveness. The second primary role of the ASCC is to set the theater which includes conducting ASOS and CUL responsibilities, conducting activities to ensure protection and access to ports, terminals, airfields, and bases within the AOR to support future contingency operations, conducting Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) as required, and conducting theater-specific training. Finally, the ASCC must have a mission command capability to respond immediately to crisis and direct operations, especially since it is the Army headquarters most familiar with the operating environment.<sup>11</sup> It must also be noted the ASCC commander serves as the principal advisor to the CCDR on support and employment of Army organizations and their capabilities in theater.<sup>12</sup> It is this role and relationship that represents the face of the U.S. Army to the CCDR.

There are ten total U.S. Army service component commands in the U.S. Army. There are six ASCC/theater armies that align with the six geographical combatant commands, and there are four functional ASCCs that align with a specific functional combatant command – each one organized slightly different including duties, responsibilities, and diverse general officer rank amongst each ASCC commanding general due to the level of capability and support required from one AOR to another.<sup>13</sup>

The six geographical ASCCs are as follows:



1. U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) / Southern European Task Force (SETAF) / Ninth U.S. Army at Vicenza, Italy (2-star command). USARAF, as the ASCC for the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), strengthens the land force capabilities of African states and regional organizations, supports USAFRICOM operations, and conducts decisive action in order to establish a secure environment and protect the national security interests of the U.S.<sup>14</sup>



2. U.S. Army Central (USARCENT) / U.S. Third Army at Shaw AFB, SC (3-star command). USARCENT, as the ASCC for the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), conducts shaping operations in the USCENTCOM AOR to deter adversaries in order to reassure and enable regional partners while sustaining ongoing U.S. operations.<sup>15</sup>



3. U.S. Army North (USARNORTH) / U.S. Fifth Army at Fort Sam Houston/ Joint Base San Antonio, TX (3-star command). USARNORTH, as the ASCC for the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), executes Department of Defense's (DoD)

homeland defense and civil support operations in the land domain, further develops, organizes, and integrates DoD Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high-yield Explosives (CBRNE) response capabilities and operations, and secures the land approaches to the homeland throughout the USNORTHCOM AOR.<sup>16</sup>



4. U.S. Army South (USARSOUTH) / U.S. Sixth Army at Fort Sam Houston/ Joint Base San Antonio, TX (2-star command). USARSOUTH, as the ASCC for the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), conducts and supports multinational operations and security cooperation throughout the USSOUTHCOM AOR in order to counter transnational threats and strengthen regional security in defense of the homeland.<sup>17</sup>



5. U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) / U.S. Seventh Army at Campbell Barracks, Heidelberg, Germany (3-star command). USAREUR, as the ASCC for the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), strengthens alliances, builds partner capacity, and trains and leads full-spectrum-capable Army forces in support of USEUCOM AOR.<sup>18</sup>



6. U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) at Fort Shafter, HI (3-star command/ nominated for a 4-star command). USARPAC, as the ASCC for the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), postures and prepares the force for unified land operations, responds to threats, sustains and protects the force, and builds military relationships that develop partner defense capacity in order to contribute to a stable and secure USPACOM AOR, with ADCON of Army forces on the Korean Peninsula.<sup>19</sup> Note: USARPAC is the only geographical ASCC headquarters not directly associated with a numbered Army, as the Pacific theater has a permanent numbered Army headquarters

with the 8<sup>th</sup> Field Army (8A) operational and stationed on the Korean Peninsula due to the enduring military situation.

The four functional ASCCs are as follows:



7. U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) at Fort Bragg, NC (3-star command). USASOC, as the ASCC for the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), controls seven major subordinate elements including special forces, light infantry, aviation, civil affairs, and psychological operations, which train and maintain special operations forces for deployment to any theater.<sup>20</sup>



8. U.S. Army Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) at Scott AFB, IL (2-star command). SDDC, as the ASCC for the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), provides ocean terminal, commercial ocean liner service, and traffic management services to deploy, sustain, and redeploy U.S. forces on a global basis. The command is responsible for surface transportation and is the interface between the Department of Defense shippers and the commercial transportation carrier industry.<sup>21</sup>



9. U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command / Army Forces Strategic Command (USASMD / ARSTRAT) at Redstone Arsenal, AL (3-star command). USASMD/ARSTRAT, as the ASCC for the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), conducts space and missile defense operations and provides planning, integration, control, and coordination of Army forces and capabilities in support of USSTRATCOM missions (strategic deterrence, integrated missile defense, and space operations).<sup>22</sup>



10. U.S. Army Cyber Command (USARCYBER) / U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Army at Fort Belvoir, VA (3-star command). USARCYBER, as the ASCC for the U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), plans, coordinates, integrates, synchronizes, directs, and conducts network operations and defense of all Army networks; when directed, conducts cyberspace operations in support of full spectrum operations to ensure U.S./Allied freedom of action in cyberspace, and to deny the same to our adversaries.<sup>23</sup>

### Theater Army

Although joint doctrine still uses the terminology ASCC or service component command to refer to the senior Army headquarters assigned to the GCC, in accordance with FM 3-93 *Theater Army Operations*, the ASCC has transformed to the theater army headquarters as the single theater-level headquarters that directly supports the GCC.<sup>24</sup> The three key components that transformed the ASCC headquarters to a theater army headquarters are: a regionally-focused headquarters with a more robust staff, regionally-focused and habitually associated theater enabling commands or functional capabilities, and a deployable operational command post capability.<sup>25</sup> These three major changes provided the legacy ASCC structure more capability and greater reach, while consolidating most support functions into a single command echelon. The theater army is a theater-committed headquarters with theater-committed enabling commands. This now gives the Army a capability to support the entire theater on a daily basis with theater sustainment, intelligence, communications architecture, medical forces, civil affairs, as well as functional capabilities such as engineer, military police, and air and missile defense.<sup>26</sup> In fact, the theater army is based on a Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) that is modular and scalable to provide the GCC a full range of

Army capabilities.<sup>27</sup> Through transformation, the ASCC staff increased capability and depth, gaining unique attributes including regional expertise and language skills specific to the region. Today, the theater army conducts all tasks assigned to the ASCC through its non-deployable Main Command Post. Although ASCCs were required to provide a C/JTF or C/JFLCC capability to the GCC, only the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Armies had the requisite structure until now. Overall, the theater army provides a regionally-oriented, long-term Army presence for peacetime military engagement, security cooperation, deterrence, limited contingency operations, and theater-wide support.

### Defining the Asia-Pacific Environment

The U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) is America's forward deployed theater army in the Asia-Pacific region directly supporting the attainment of national strategic, theater strategic, and operational objectives. USARPAC is uniquely designed and positioned to conduct a wide range of operations indispensable in enhancing the joint force's ability to gain and maintain access to areas throughout the region that would otherwise be denied. To understand the challenges and recommendations to improve the current theater army headquarters structure, it is important to understand the Asia-Pacific environment that influences the way the Army must adapt to meet the demands of this theater.

The Asia-Pacific region's increasing significance to America's national defense strategy is a recognition of the operational environment in the Pacific Area of Responsibility (AOR): three of the four most populous nations are in the Asia-Pacific region [People's Republic of China (PRC), India, and Indonesia]; five of the United States' seven mutual defense treaties are with Pacific region nations [Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Thailand, Philippines, and Australia]; and more than one-third of all

U.S. foreign trade transits the Pacific.<sup>28</sup> The AOR encompasses approximately 50% of the earth's surface, spans 15 time zones, and contains a linguistic mosaic of over 3,000 spoken languages.<sup>29</sup> From a U.S. defense strategy perspective, this theater has long been considered preeminently a maritime concern, but contesting this view is the presence of seven of the world's ten largest armies [PRC, U.S., India, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), ROK, Vietnam, and Burma].<sup>30</sup> Land components in the majority of AOR countries are not only the largest service by far, but usually the most politically influential. An Army officer serves as the Chief of Defense for twenty-one of the twenty-seven nations with armed forces in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>31</sup> The ability to control land and influence outcomes in an era of persistent conflict has proven essential to America's defense of the homeland as well as its national interests abroad. The enduring imperative for a capable, flexible, and committed Army in the Pacific is self-evident.

As the U.S. refocuses the instruments of national power on the Asia-Pacific region to secure its interests, it does so in the face of significant opportunities and challenges. China's economic rise and increased political and military activity present both opportunities and risks for regional security. Both China and the U.S. share an overarching interest to maintain regional stability and prevent conflicts. North Korea, however, remains a focus of unpredictability and instability and its fate remains inextricably linked to U.S. defense posture throughout Northeast Asia. Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) continue operations under sometimes favorable conditions in parts of South and Southeast Asia. Contentious border and territorial issues throughout the region threaten to destabilize ethnic, diplomatic, and economic relations of disputants.

Some of the most devastating natural and man-made disasters in recorded history have occurred in the Asia-Pacific region in just the past decade. The Asia-Pacific alliances and partnerships, forged during peace and war to form the bedrock of regional security cooperation, provide a means to leverage the wellspring of trust, confidence, access, and influence accumulated through decades of Army engagement.<sup>32</sup>

### History of the Army in the Pacific

U.S. Army Pacific traces its history back to 1898, when the United States first became a Pacific power and American Soldiers first arrived in Hawaii. Hawaii soon became a power-projection platform for military operations in the Asia-Pacific region. Fort Shafter, located just outside Honolulu, Hawaii, became the headquarters for the Hawaiian Department, the Army's largest overseas department, in 1921. When Army and Navy forces in Hawaii and the Philippines came under attack on 7 December 1941, Hawaii quickly became a strategic hub. The Hawaiian Department became the Army component command under the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas. As the campaigns progressed, the command was designated U.S. Army Forces, Central Pacific Area (from 1943 to 1944); U.S. Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas (from 1944 to 1945); and U.S. Army Forces, Middle Pacific (from 1945 to 1947).<sup>33</sup>

Following World War II, numerous Army headquarters in the central Pacific were consolidated with the goal of forming a single Army command based in Hawaii. In 1947, the command was re-designated U.S. Army, Pacific. During the Korean War, USARPAC provided combat forces, training, and logistical support. In 1957, the Joint Chiefs of Staff eliminated the U.S. Far East Command, located in Tokyo, Japan, in favor of a single U.S. Pacific Command, and USARPAC took control of all Army forces in the region. As the Army component of the unified command led by the U.S. Commander-in-

Chief Pacific (USCINCPAC), USARPAC was assigned a threefold mission: provide necessary ground Army combat forces; support those forces administratively and logistically; and provide reserves and contingency plans to meet any ground threat to United States interests in the Pacific.<sup>34</sup>

During the Vietnam War, USARPAC provided combat forces, training, and logistical support for U.S. Army, Vietnam. After the war, the Army reduced its presence in the region and reorganized. In 1974, USARPAC was eliminated as a component command and Army forces in South Korea and Japan became separate direct reporting commands. Army units in Hawaii were assigned to U.S. Army Forces Command in Atlanta, Georgia, and a small Department of the Army field operating agency, U.S. Army CINCPAC Support Group, was established in Hawaii as a liaison between the Department of the Army and USCINCPAC.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the Commander of U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) requested the Army establish a major command in Hawaii, commensurate with other military service component commands, to address shortfalls in Army support of USPACOM activities. On 23 March 1979, the Department of the Army announced the establishment of the U.S. Army Western Command (WESTCOM) as a major command and the Army component of U.S. Pacific Command. WESTCOM took command of Army forces in Hawaii. WESTCOM ensured the readiness of its forces for Pacific-based contingencies and developed a robust military engagement program with regional armies. It spanned the range of senior officer visits, bilateral exercises, small unit activities, individual Soldier exchanges, and multinational security conferences. These

activities became and continue to be the centerpiece of the USPACOM Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP).<sup>36</sup>

U.S. interests in the Pacific region have grown as trade with Asia-Pacific nations has eclipsed trade with America's traditional partners in Europe. Therefore, the assignment of an ASCC and Army forces within the region ensured that Army activities within the theater are responsive to the regional combatant commander's priorities and requirements. In the early 1990s, U.S. Army forces in the Pacific were further consolidated, with the addition of U.S. Army Alaska and U.S. Army Japan to the Command, while the Command was re-designated as U.S. Army Pacific at Fort Shafter, Hawaii on 30 August 1990. This facilitated theater-level management of a larger force pool and closer integration of Army activities with the regional combatant commander's priorities.<sup>37</sup>

In October 2000, USARPAC became a Multi-Component Unit (MCU) and Army Service Component Command (ASCC) as part of the U.S. Army transformation to meet the emerging security needs of the United States in which USARPAC was a key strategic player. Yet these important transitions in reality still left USARPAC as an ASCC in name only. It was a Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) organization, non-deployable, and without complete authority over all Army forces in the theater. As new security requirements emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Army realized the need to transform the legacy USARPAC in a comprehensive manner to ensure that both the combatant commander's and its own requirements were met. In 2007, transforming from as ASCC to a theater army was another step in the evolution of the U.S. Army in

the Pacific Region. On 1 October 2011, the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the Republic of Korea was placed under administrative control of USARPAC.<sup>38</sup>

### Theater-level Command Relationships

Army transformation and the evolution of the Army operational concept for the theater army have greatly enhanced USARPAC's ability to effectively function as the single ASCC for all Army operations within the USPACOM AOR, but this remains an Army-only responsibility. When it comes to interacting with the USPACOM Commander and staff, the Army and USARPAC fall short. USPACOM has routinely dismissed USARPAC as a viable solution to many regional issues due to USARPAC's Department of the Army-centric focus and limited availability.<sup>39</sup> Too often the ASCC is focused backwards towards Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) and Washington, D.C. rather than forward to the GCC. Within the last two decades, most USARPAC commanding generals have never served at the theater-level and tend to be more focused on supporting HQDA priorities and requirements than the GCC. It is evident the ASCC/theater army leaders are not ready for the duties and responsibilities, and certainly lack theater-strategic experience.<sup>40</sup> The Army must make adjustments to prioritize this level of command and strategic experience for the Army's rising senior leaders. To improve selection, the ASCC/theater army command must not be the last stop in a general officer's career. It should be the Army's stepping stone and pre-requisite for selection as a GCC commander or deputy commander. Likewise, to serve as an ASCC/theater army commander, I recommend the general officer receive joint experience as a primary joint-code directorate on a GCC staff earlier in their career. Therefore, the potential career path for an ASCC/theater army commanding general includes service in a GCC directorate position, ASCC/theater army command, then

GCC commander or deputy commander. It is important for the ASCC/theater army commanding general to have the strategic experience necessary to be an indispensable partner and provider of a full range of capabilities to the GCC in a complex and uncertain environment.

The Army must be responsive to the GCC's priorities and requirements, including a JTF-capable headquarters, fulfilling priority billets and commitments, countering anti-access, area denial (A2AD) capabilities, etc. The Army must be the primary enabling and integrating element of landpower, therefore it must be the headquarters of choice. The U.S. Army Pacific's transformation must reflect the changing security environment and meet USPACOM priorities and requirements. Providing mission command for small-scale contingency operations and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) and peacekeeping operations is not enough. USARPAC is the most familiar Army headquarters, at any level, with the Asia-Pacific operating environment. Why replace USARPAC by a less familiar and lesser known headquarters with limited regional experience during crisis? On a daily basis, USARPAC executes the Army's strategic role of Prevent, Shape, Win.<sup>41</sup> No other Army command is focused on the three Army roles in the Pacific theater. Additionally, USARPAC executes the USPACOM theater strategy rooted in partnerships, presence, and military readiness.<sup>42</sup> Both strategies require persistent engagement, clear and open communication, situational awareness, credibility and confidence, and forward presence. Therefore, established relationships forged by USARPAC over an extended timeframe cannot be replicated by another Army headquarters in a shorter period. A regionally-focused, theater army headquarters and its enabling commands provide USPACOM a significant

resource as it plans for contingency operations and executes an expanding TSCP essential to preventing future conflicts. With technology advances, increased information flow, and constant situational awareness, extended timelines previously required to react to crisis are greatly diminished. Therefore, USARPAC as a theater army must possess the capability to C2 major forces in time of crisis, as the CCDR has come to expect this capability of his service component commands.

#### ASCC / Theater Army Command Structure and Capabilities

Historically, echelons of command at the operational level of war have gone through an evolutionary process. During World War I, the theater commander used an intermediate headquarters – the field army – to control multiple corps. The World War II structure expanded this, using army groups and field armies between the theater and corps commanders. Army groups were formed to control two to five field armies, while the field army could control a like number of corps. Now with few corps in existence, the requirement for the army group and field army have been eliminated, but the functions performed by these army formations have not been eliminated. This results in today's ASCC performing those functions. However, if a potential future crisis requires a numbered Army headquarters, the issue becomes the ability of the current ASCC/theater army to maintain adequate span of control.<sup>43</sup> Formations are more modern, mobile, and lethal today than during WWII when field armies last existed. These advantages permit smaller formations to operate with less control. Therefore, given the right capabilities, is the ASCC/theater army the better choice to provide the necessary C2 for a theater during crisis?

Army transformation and the evolution of the Army operational concept for the theater army have greatly enhanced USARPAC's ability to effectively function as the

single ASCC for all Army operations within the Pacific, to include the Korean Peninsula. Additionally, a full complement of regionally-focused but globally-aware enabling commands, agile and versatile enough to respond rapidly and effectively to a variety of contingencies, were a key component in the theater army transformation. The re-stationing and standup of theater-enabling commands (TECs) aligned with USARPAC gives the commander reliable and responsive Title 10 support and facilitates Army Support to Other Services (ASOS) for operations in the AOR spanning the full range of military operations.<sup>44</sup> USARPAC now includes a full complement of theater support and enabling commands that provide enhanced communications, intelligence, logistics, medical, civil affairs, air and missile defense, and reserve component readiness capabilities. USARPAC executes mission command across the vast Asia-Pacific region with a theater-wide, expansible command and control network that facilitates reach-back through forward-positioning, modern communications technologies. The network facilitates continuous communications and cutting-edge information assurance to allow persistent observation of developing situations.<sup>45</sup>

USARPAC maintains a theater intelligence capability, theater sustainment capability, theater network capability, theater medical capability, theater air and missile defense capability, and is working towards a dedicated theater civil affairs capability. The USARPAC TECs have oversight of all functions across the Pacific, and include the following subordinate commands:<sup>46</sup>

- 8<sup>th</sup> Theater Sustainment Command (8<sup>th</sup> TSC)
- 311<sup>th</sup> Signal Command (Theater) (311 SC)
- 94<sup>th</sup> Army Air and Missile Defense Command (94<sup>th</sup> AAMDC)

- 500<sup>th</sup> Military Intelligence Brigade (500<sup>th</sup> MI Bde)
- 18<sup>th</sup> Medical Command (18<sup>th</sup> MEDCOM)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Battlefield Coordination Detachment (5<sup>th</sup> BCD)

With the transformation of the ASCC to a theater army and the addition of the TECs, does this signify a shift in the role of the ASCC/theater army? Is there a paradigm shift occurring with the speed of information flow, technology advances, limited regional access which necessitates the further review and development of how the Army should command theaters? If this shift is occurring, does this require more capability and priority given to the ASCC/theater army?

The combatant commander looks to the ASCC/theater army to serve as or provide a Joint Task Force (JTF) commander or a functional component commander, specifically, the Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC). The CCDR does not determine how this capability is provided, but does expect a globally responsive and regionally engaged C2 headquarters. In some cases, the CCDR may not establish a JTF, retaining operational control over subordinate functional commands and service components directly. Can USARPAC provide this capability today?

The Army's design is for the corps headquarters to perform the role of a JTF or JFLCC in theater, yet AR 10-87 states the ASCC will serve as a JTF or JFLCC.<sup>47</sup> However, the theater army headquarters only has a limited JTF or JFLCC capability for small-scale contingency operations. Should the Army increase the ASCC/theater army's capability? There are several core foundations supporting the theater army's requirement to serve as a JTF or JFLCC. First, the ASCC/theater army is entirely focused on the region and has built relationships within the region and with the GCC

staff and other service component staffs over an extended period of time. Additionally, the ASCC/theater army brings a unique capability in the robust Foreign Area Officer staff – experts on every country in the region. A corps headquarters' limited regional knowledge and expertise cannot measure up. Second, the ASCC/theater army is immersed in the theater including engagement, solving current issues, executing the Theater Campaign Plan and other Phase 0 contingency plan activities, attending GCC command and staff meetings, and participating in, as well as members on, various Bureaus, Boards, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups (B2C2WG) and other GCC battle rhythm events. The brink of crisis is not the time to switch headquarters and forge new relationships, which can cause further confusion. Even with regional-alignment, a corps headquarters does not re-position into theater, does not have established habitual relations within the theater, and has other distracters from outside the region that prevents absolute focus, such as answering to a different command for daily business. Changing leadership and headquarters during crisis execution creates an operational pause, disrupts established continuity, and requires a rapid learning curve for the newly deployed command. Third, today's operational environment does not guarantee forward regional access and does not support long timelines for deployment, as time is a critical factor in the decision cycle. With today's communications capabilities and operational reach, it is not a priority for a major headquarters to be forward deployed during every crisis. A corps headquarters must deploy into theater, establish C2 nodes, bring a significant logistics footprint, and ensure adequate infrastructure – all of which causes a time-delay in responsiveness. The Army must provide the best solution that is responsive to the GCC.

Joint doctrine lays out a theater-JFLCC option for the GCC.<sup>48</sup> The theater army design allows for a theater-JFLCC to coordinate with other theater-level functional components, provide general support to multiple Joint Operating Areas (JOAs) within the Asia-Pacific, conduct theater-level contingency planning, and conduct joint RSOI for the entire land force.<sup>49</sup> The USARPAC TECs make the theater-JFLCC capability possible, which the U.S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) headquarters – USARPAC’s land peer in the Pacific – does not have. The theater-JFLCC is a daily responsibility supporting the GCC. Establishing a JFLCC to which the Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces work collaboratively with USPACOM for planning and synchronizing efforts may prove to fill a possible seam in steady-state and contingency ground force coordination.<sup>50</sup> Another key theater-JFLCC role during steady-state is coordinating and synchronizing the Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) for ground operations across the Pacific AOR, which is a crucial element toward preventing future conflicts. USARPAC, the decisive theater land force in the Pacific, is the theater-JFLCC headquarters capable of executing a sustained and unified land-based security strategy in support of the USPACOM Commander’s Theater Campaign Plan. USARPAC’s strong Army partnerships across the theater develop the trust and confidence necessary to form and foster participation in multinational, land-force coalitions that will respond to the future crises and contingencies that lie ahead. U.S. history shows partnerships with allies, friends, and neighbors always proved decisive to our nation’s success. This remains true today. The “coalition of the willing” does not work if pieced together at the last minute. Partnerships must always be there. No nation or government can “surge” trust and influence among its allies and partners. The U.S.

military remains the security partner of choice, and USARPAC as the theater-JFLCC will continue to build and maintain creditability, confidence, and trust through persistent engagement with U.S. allies and partners. By, with, and through allies and partners is the best way to ensure peace and security in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>51</sup> USARPAC must provide the GCC a robust expeditionary command and control structure, which can help deter aggression, advance regional security and cooperation, respond to crisis, and fight to win.

#### Select Theater Army Staff Sections and Organization Redesign

USARPAC requires a theater-strategic primary staff focused on long-term objectives, with a robust battle staff to monitor the theater, synchronize operational activities, rapidly respond to crisis, and leverage the theater enabling commands. Operating at the theater-strategic level, the staff must be driven by long-term goals and objectives, with a capability to focus near-term. The staff should be split between monitoring, assessing, and supervising operations, while the remaining staff conducts planning, analysis and assessments, and provides strategy and policy guidance. However, the actual theater army headquarters staff structure in FM 3-93 is designed more towards a near-term focus at an operational level, rather than at a theater-strategic level with a long-term focus. There are four major areas addressed as recommended changes to the current USARPAC Theater Army staff structure and intended to improve staff responsiveness, integration, efficiency, and function. The recommended changes cover the current overall theater army staff design, the Movement and Maneuver Cell design, the Contingency Command Post, and staff culture issues.

In accordance with FM 3-93, the theater army headquarters staff structure is designed around a Main Command Post (MCP), a Contingency Command Post (CCP), and a Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion (HHB) which provides administrative and sustainment support to the theater army headquarters.<sup>52</sup> The MCP and the CCP are structurally organized around six functional groupings called warfighting functional cells, which are intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, protection, sustainment, and mission command. It seems odd for a theater army not to reference strategy amongst these functional groupings when most of the staff is focused on long-term theater-strategic issues. USARPAC does not embrace the functional groupings, except for the Protection Cell, and instead uses the traditional G-staff structure. The USARPAC primary staff is organized into the G-1, G-2, G-3/5/7/9, G-4, G-6, G-8, and the Protection Cell. The Mission Command Cell is completely dissolved as a section. This USARPAC staff structure is more representative of the HQDA organization than the USPACOM staff, yet it would be easier if the USARPAC Theater Army headquarters staff structure looked more like its higher headquarters staff – USPACOM. This preferred alignment would enhance cross staff involvement, streamline command group interaction, and increase responsibility for multiple staff leaders.

By design, the entire Movement and Maneuver Cell is under the G-3.<sup>53</sup> This negatively gives this cell a greater operational focus and brings the entire cell much closer to the near fight rather than at a strategic view. Again, a theater army headquarters must be strategic and long-term focused as very few decisions at this level will change the daily operational picture. However, USARPAC organizes the G-3, G-5, G-7, G-9, and Fires Cell all under a single individual – the G-3/5/7/9 Directorate. By

designing a diverse focused staff section under a single boss, it reduces staff flexibility and creates groupthink. Both the FM 3-93 Movement and Maneuver Cell and USARPAC's G-3/5/7/9 Staff Directorate are poorly designed and do not reflect the USPACOM staff structure. It is important as an ASCC/theater army to look like your higher headquarters staff – the GCC staff – because it simplifies staff interaction and establishes known relationships.

Looking further at the FM 3-93 Movement and Maneuver Cell and USARPAC's G-3/5/7/9 Staff Directorate structure, a theater army headquarters must have a separate G-5 Strategic Planning and Policy Directorate from the G-3 Operations Directorate – just like USPACOM J-5 and J-3 staffs, respectively – to avoid the groupthink and ensure a balanced staff approach to solve complex problems.<sup>54</sup> Due to the wide variance and focus between staffs, separation makes sense. If not, the G-5 Division is pulled into the current fight by the G-3/5/7/9 Directorate. Also, the G-3/5/7/9 becomes overwhelmed regularly with such a large and diverse staff, further supporting the requirement to split the G-3/5/7/9 Directorate between G-3 Operations (near fight) and G-5 Strategic Planning and Policy (far fight). Under the G-5 Strategic Planning and Policy Directorate, both the G-5 Plans Division and the Security Cooperation Division are joined together in one directorate. This will synchronize like efforts – directly complimenting each other – where Strategic Planners support the strategy side while the Foreign Area Officers provide the policy expertise. Other Divisions that deserve their own directorates separate from the G-3 Operations Directorate is the G-7 Training and Exercises Directorate (which aligns with USPACOM J-7 staff) and the G-9 Civil Affairs Directorate (which also aligns with USPACOM J-9 staff). The current G-7 Information Operations

Division should be retained within the G-3 Operations Directorate as a sub-division, such as G-39 Information Operations Division (which aligns with the USAPCOM J-39 IO staff). Finally, a G-33 Current Operations Division should be created under the G-3 with the Current Operations and Integration Cell (COIC) placed under the G-33 rather than report directly to the G-3, as it is currently designed. The G-33 will provide additional staff to work current operations issues while the COIC can focus on running the operation and maintaining situational awareness. Again, this will align USARPAC's Current Operations with USPACOM's J-33 and the Joint Operations Center (JOC). Creating the new directorates equal to the G-3, such as the G-5 Strategic Planning and Policy Directorate, G-7 Training and Exercise Directorate, and the G-9 Civil Affairs Directorate, will streamline staff access to the command group, improve feedback, and better align and improve rating schemes for those directorates.

The Contingency Command Post (CCP), shown as a separate staff structure and organization from the MCP in FM 3-93, provides the theater army with an immediate response capability to unanticipated crisis and contingencies in theater short of major combat operations.<sup>55</sup> The CCP must be physically integrated with the MCP at all times unless deployed. By presenting the CCP as a separate organization, this sets a bad precedent. USARPAC organizes the CCP separate from the MCP with its own facility and isolated from the rest of the USARPAC staff. This actually degrades interoperability with the MCP. In addition, the CCP lacks almost all awareness of the USARPAC staff rhythm and priorities, does not interact with USPACOM or other service components, and provides limited staff input after training and exercise deployments. An improvement is to assign those ninety-six CCP personnel directly to the MCP, and then

let each staff directorate be responsible to fill their own CCP requirements. Then, the directorate could rotate personnel from within their section to provide training and experience for multiple staff members. Also, if those CCP personnel are integrated back into the MCP, they can provide additional manpower and expertise during day-to-day operations – something all hard-working staffs welcome. Therefore, I recommend not showing a separate CCP structure in FM 3-93, and instead designate MCP billets that are dual-assigned with deployable positions. Right now, the USARPAC staff personnel are divided between the CCP and the MCP creating staff and personnel inefficiencies and increasing overall workload.

Finally, working at the theater-strategic level is unique, with few subordinate assignments that can prepare someone for success at this level – especially in the staff leadership roles. There is no correlation that a successful tactical career ensures a successful strategic career. Tactical and strategic are at diverse echelons where one is battlefield problem-solving while the other uses art and science to respond to national interests. These levels of war truly have different cultures or identities, and an unknown and unfamiliar strategic culture can impact a new staff and officer performance.

There is no designated promotion or career path that prepares a mid-grade officer for assignment at an ASCC/theater army headquarters. Frequently officers are pre-positioned at these headquarters for less than a year waiting for their battalion or brigade command assignments to become available. Other officers are assigned at the ASCC-level because they were passed over for Command and General Staff College or the U.S. Army War College. The bottom line is the ASCC/theater army headquarters is not a priority for assignment – but should be.<sup>56</sup> Just like a standard combat arms

promotion path for battalion or brigade command, there must be a career path designed at the ASCC-level to ensure senior officers receive adequate mid-level training and strategic experience prior to assignments at this level. The ASCC/theater army should not be the first time a colonel has worked at the strategic level. If an assignment does not enhance an officer's career, why would an officer want the position?

Just like a joint assignment is given assignment priority, so should the ASCC/theater army, and to reward this assignment, an additional skill identifier should be designated. The current U.S. Army education system lacks training at the operational and strategic levels for mid-grade officers. The majority of staff officers in an ASCC/theater army headquarters are majors and lieutenant colonels – but there is no strategic level training available to them. Consider creating a similar U.S. Army school, like the Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) Phase II education for joint staff, focused at the operational and strategic level and available to mid-grade officers assigned to corps and ASCC/theater army headquarters. Education is important, fills a knowledge gap, and is a force multiplier. This education can create a valid transition for tactically-focused leaders to serve at the operational and strategic levels of command.

There is a culture problem that exists from years of tactical experience and command that does not translate well at the theater-strategic level. Operators who serve at the battalion and brigade command have difficulty employing a future operations and a plans staff.<sup>57</sup> These specialty staffs are almost non-existent at the tactical level, so many battalion and brigade commanders do not know how best to utilize these staffs. Separating the G-5 Plans Division from the G-3 will naturally fix the plans disconnect. However, future operations is an operations function, and cannot be

separated from the G-3. Like a G-33 Current Operations Division, there must be an equal G-35 Future Operations Division in the G-3 – with both divisions led by an O-6/Colonel. Both positions are perfect for former brigade commanders. However, what is generally misunderstood by most tactically-experienced leaders is that the Future Operations Division is the center or nucleus of effort during crisis at the strategic level – not the Current Operations Division. This misunderstanding greatly weakens an ASCC/theater army headquarters' capability as little attention is given to the Future Operations Division – just like in a battalion, brigade, or sometimes division headquarters. Crisis Action Planning is the responsibility of the Future Operations Division.<sup>58</sup> Without a G-35 Future Operations Division performing their assigned duties and responsibilities, especially during crisis, the ASCC/theater army staff becomes misaligned with the GCC staff, as the GCC J-35 Future Operations Division is certainly the driver on every AOR crisis or future event. This void in parallel efforts is a root cause for USARPAC not being the C2 of choice at USPACOM during crises. The Future Operations Division must be a staff priority and given equal stature to the Current Operations Division. At minimum, the division requires an O-6/Colonel to lead the division, with a former battalion commander and a FA59 Strategic Planner as other priority fills.

Finally, FM 3-93 uses unfamiliar naming conventions for several important theater army staff organizations that do not resonate with the GCC – further alienating the ASCC/theater army staff from the GCC staff. The Current Operations and Integration Cell (COIC) is the term for the Command Center at the ASCC/theater army headquarters. Although the COIC is not described as a command center in FM 3-93,

there is no other staff that performs this function and operates the actual facility.<sup>59</sup> From the perspective of the GCC, the COIC is the Command Center.<sup>60</sup> Based on transformation and design, the COIC may have less capability than a normal Command Operations Center, but it is the GCC's point of entry for a common Army picture across the theater. Without causing additional confusion, the ASCC/theater army should use the term command center. Another term that creates unnecessary questions is the Contingency Command Post (CCP). USPACOM automatically expects USARPAC to provide a JTF or JFLCC-capable headquarters when called upon. Instead of USARPAC acknowledging the mission requirement, the command promotes a limited capability called the CCP. This causes confusion for USPACOM, and the GCC staff must re-evaluate when to employ USARPAC C2 during crises. Any staff hesitation causes USARPAC not to be the C2 of choice. I recommend the CCP term not be used to promote a capability that is already thought to exist inherent in an organization. It is like trying to sell a basic model automobile without any options just because the car dealership does not have the model with options on the showroom floor. The CCP is a great capability, but promoting it as a capability separate from the ASCC/theater army headquarters diminishes the command's overall reach-back status.<sup>61</sup> In general, it is better to use common terms and capabilities than to constantly explain what those names and organizations represent. As a subordinate headquarters and Army component to the GCC, the U.S. Army should not be inventing new naming conventions or concepts to further distance the two organizations, but should align with the GCC staff to ensure seamless coordination, synchronization, and enduring support.

## Conclusion

Each GCC has an ASCC/theater army assigned to it, and it is organized to provide a regionally-oriented, long-term Army presence for peacetime military engagement, security cooperation, deterrence, and limited intervention operations. Additionally, the theater army's primary roles include: 1) combatant commander's daily operations requirements, 2) setting the theater, and 3) providing mission command for immediate crisis response. However, the current ASCC/theater army design provides limited capability for mission command, which is insufficient to perform as a JTF or JLFCC headquarters for major operations within the AOR even though the GCC may designate the theater army headquarters as a theater-level JFLCC with command and control, protection, and sustainment responsibilities. To provide this capability directly would require a re-design of the current ASCC/theater army organization and structure. The Army strategy for global mission command of Army forces relies on the modular corps headquarters to mission command major operations instead of theater armies, but there are limited numbers of corps headquarters regionally-focused on a daily basis. The ASCC/theater army is the senior Army commander during daily operations, establishing working relationships with the combatant commander and other U.S. services in theater, conducting theater security engagements, gaining regional expertise, and is responsible for all contingency planning. Known command and support relationships are the basis for unity of command and unity of effort in operations. Therefore, as the primary Army headquarters in theater with established relationships, changing leadership and headquarters during crisis execution creates an operational pause, disrupts established continuity, and requires a rapid learning curve for the newly deployed command. The ASCC/theater army must optimally organize to provide a

robust headquarters to meet the multiple demands of the GCC in peacetime and crisis. Transform to a new theater army structure that provides a theater-JFLCC-capable headquarters, immediately available, to meet all GCC requirements across the entire AOR. The operational/transformation concept of streamlined and integrated command and control capabilities by a headquarters – by design, regionally-focused to deftly handle the complex and difficult problems from the strategic to operational levels – is truly challenging. Any staff restructuring without training or maturity amounts to reorganization with hollow effect. Therefore, the theater army staff structure must change to improve staff responsiveness, integration, efficiency, and function while aligning with the GCC staff.

#### Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, and Direct Reporting Units*, Army Regulation 10-87 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, September 4, 2007), 1.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Theater Army Operations*, x; U.S. Department of the Army, *Decisive Operations: The Army in Theater Operations*, Field Manual 100-7 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 31, 1995), iii.

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Theater Army Operations*, 1-8.

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, and Direct Reporting Units*, 1.

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<sup>38</sup> Hilkert.

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